



Australian Bureau of Statistics

1301.6 - Tasmanian Year Book, 1996

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Feature Article - Tasmanian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey was conducted in 1994. It resulted from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and aimed to provide information to address the disadvantaged and unequal position of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within Australian society. Those surveyed included people with different lifestyles - from remote and rural to urban and metropolitan centres. People living in remote communities, town camps and households in urban areas were visited as well as people in hostels, boarding schools and prisons. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were recruited and trained in most areas to conduct the interviews. Information was collected on a wide range of issues such as families and culture, housing, employment and income, education and training, and law and justice.

The extent to which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people identify with and maintain their Indigenous culture may be indicated by their participation in Indigenous cultural activities; their use of Indigenous languages; the extent to which they identify with clan, tribal or language groups; and their recognition of and access to homelands.

In Tasmania, of those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders aged 13 years and over, 31% (2,072 of 6,597 people) said that they had participated in or attended some form of Indigenous cultural activity (such as attending a funeral, festival, carnival or ceremony or being involved in Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisations) over the past year. This compared with 72% Australia-wide.

Some 18% of those aged 13 years and over (1,166 people) identified with a clan, tribal or language group (compared with 60% Australia-wide); and 66% (4,383) believed that the role of elders is important (compared with 84% Australia-wide).

Approximately 40% of those aged 13 years and over (2,633 people) recognised a homeland, an area of land to which people have ancestral and/or cultural links. This compared with 75% of the Australian Indigenous population.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS, CULTURE - 1994

Persons aged 13 years and over

Persons aged 5 years and over

	Sees elders			Attended cultural activities	Total	Speaks an indigenous language		Total
	Identifies with a clan	%	Sees elders as being important			%	'000	
NSW	47.8	82.3	68.6	67.1	52.0	2.7	68.6	
Vic.	45.1	80.5	70.6	60.5	12.6	*2.4	16.2	
Qld	57.2	81.9	75.0	72.3	52.1	15.1	67.7	
SA	67.9	87.6	80.4	75.4	11.9	23.4	15.8	
WA	63.7	86.3	75.4	80.7	30.2	20.9	40.1	
Tas.	17.7	66.5	39.9	31.5	6.6	*1.0	8.7	
NT	92.0	94.7	93.8	84.5	30.9	74.1	40.1	
Aust(a)	59.8	84.4	75.2	72.1	197.5	21.0	258.7	

* estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution

(a) Includes ACT and Jervis Bay

Source: ABS data available on request, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey: Detailed Findings.

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